March 1, 2017

Rebecca Spang  
Co-Chair, University Faculty Council  
Ballantine Hall 742  
IU Bloomington

Rachel Applegate  
Co-Chair, University Faculty Council  
IT 561  
IUPUI

Joe Wert  
Co-Chair, University Faculty Council  
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Dear Rebecca, Rachel, and Joe,

As you are aware, there have been a number of petitions circulating on various IU campuses, asking that IU formally declare itself a "sanctuary campus." There has been much discussion of these issues in faculty governance, student government organizations, and throughout the Indiana University community.

These are very important discussions and conversations given that the recent federal announcements regarding immigration and immigration status touch on matters of the greatest importance to us as members of the IU community and as members of local, state, national, and indeed international communities. It is in the great tradition of universities to consider and vigorously debate such matters. And as a university that prides itself on global engagement, IU is especially concerned with matters that involve the movement of persons and ideas across national borders. Our deep and long-established ties with institutions, individuals, and communities around the world are a vital part of IU's international engagement in both education and research.

As this matter has evolved, our most pressing concern has been the safety and well-being of IU students and faculty members. Unless they have a fundamental sense of security, they cannot effectively learn, educate, discover, and participate in all that the university has to offer. Given this, IU has consistently and publicly supported federal legislation such as the DREAM and BRIDGE acts. More recently, I have described in detail the steps that IU will take, and will refrain from taking, in formal statements at the December 2016 and February 2017 meetings of the Board of Trustees [http://president.iu.edu/speeches/statements/2016/20161201-01.shtml,  

These various statements, and others by senior university officials, describe specific, concrete actions that will protect IU students and faculty to the full extent permitted and required by law. For this reason, IU will not take the step of declaring itself a sanctuary campus. Designation as a sanctuary campus has no fixed meaning, has no legal standing, and hence, would be purely symbolic. It would add no additional legal or
practical support to IU students or faculty. At the same time, such a declaration suggests more than a university can deliver, as other university leaders have also observed. IU cannot choose whether or not to abide by federal or state law, and it would be a disservice to state or imply that such is the case. We need to be mindful that a declaration of sanctuary could also risk possible negative attention for the university or for some members of the university community. A declaration could actually undermine our most pressing concern, the safety and well-being of our students and faculty, and the preservation of our mission as a fully globally engaged institution of higher learning. In addition, there is some reason to hope that a significant number of otherwise vulnerable individuals will not, in fact, be targeted under new federal policies.

All of us at IU fully understand and appreciate the anxiety that many of our students and our faculty colleagues are currently experiencing. It is not what we want for them, and it is not what we want for the university. Indiana University will continue to do all it can to support all affected in this matter consistent with the law. Details can be found at [https://ois.iu.edu/visas/daca-resources.html, https://ois.iu.edu/visas/immigration-updates.html].

Please distribute this email to members of the UFC and others as you see fit. These are very difficult matters and I greatly appreciate the support of you and your colleagues concerning them. It is essential to keep working together to ensure that we are doing all we can to support all those potentially affected and to sustain our values as a great university.

Yours sincerely,

Michael A. McRobbie
President

MAM/bfs

cc: Lauren Robel, Executive Vice President, IU; Provost, IU Bloomington
      Nasser Paydar, Executive Vice President, IU; Chancellor, IUPUI
      John Applegate, Executive Vice President for University Academic Affairs, IU
      Karen Adams, Chief of Staff, Office of the President, IU